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available in rush hours with relatively short trains. A disadvantage is the fact that these coaches cannot be used in foreign countries and that no mixed trains of older types and the new ones can be formed. (There will also be an end to the familiar refreshment trolley ED.) Whether these double decked coaches will be available with tilting body technology is not yet known, but if so, then the upper deck will have to be considerably narrowed to remain within the loading gauge.

**Tilting body technology** On several occasions both Mr. Weibel and Mr. Faganini of the SBB management have hinted in interviews of the possible purchase of passenger trains with tilting body technology. A decision was due to be made on 1 April 1993 regarding the *Pendolino* trains for the Geneva - Brig - Milan and Bern - Brig - Milan services.

**Südostbahn** The SOB is in negotiation with the SBB for the purchase of the four SBB Re4/4<sup>IV</sup> locomotives with angle phase control,

to replace the two leased East German engines. With four engines in addition to the existing Re4/4<sup>III</sup> locomotives, the SOB should be able to meet the increasing demand for goods transport over its metals.

**Rhätische Bahn** The Vereina Tunnel is progressing fairly well; in the spring it was slightly below the budgeted cost and somewhat ahead of schedule.

**Bern-Lötschberg-Simplon Group** The BLS has formed a subsidiary company named *BLS AlpTransit AG* charged with the construction of the NEAT tunnel through the Lötschberg.

**AlpTransit (NEAT)** The transport ministers of the EC have refused to allow the EC Commissioners to negotiate a treaty for free access to the European air market. The main opponents were Portugal, Spain and Belgium. Whilst this is not yet a breach of the relevant clause in the transit treaty, it may well be possible that NEAT will be postponed as a consequence.

## Trials and Tribulations

**The introduction** of the new steam rack locomotives on the Brienz Rothorn and Rochers de Naye lines last year was not without its difficulties. The new locomotives, whilst externally similar to the existing machines on the Rothorn line are internally very different. It is not merely the oil firing, it is that the efficiently insulated boilers with novel design features call for special handling.

Initially, only one driver on the Rothorn was retrained to handle the new locomotive. This was asking for trouble, hardly had the new locomotive entered service than he was called up for his three weeks military duty. With one man short and peak traffic demand putting the rest of the staff under pressure it was not practicable to release anyone else for training, so No.12 languished in the sidings.

When the trained driver returned, the coaches equipped with air brakes for use with the new locomotive had to be tested. Correcting the inevitable faults took more time, at the end of which the driver was involved in a motorcycle accident. Fortunately it was not serious, but he was off work for a couple more

weeks. At this point the BRB decided to train a diesel driver to handle the new locomotive. It was not until August before No.12 was in regular use. Murphy's Law reigns supreme.

It is pleasant to report that these peripheral troubles only delayed the important business of proving the new design in service. Here the story is different, all of SLM's promises were met to the full, indeed the power output is better than predicted and single man operation has been a complete success.

The situation on the Rochers de Naye was complicated by the fact that no steam trained drivers were available and so the new locomotive was initially driven by its designer, Roger Waller. He was simultaneously training three men to handle the locomotive and his task was not eased by the fact that the line is in the French speaking part of Switzerland and his first language is German. Another problem he faced was that, at the same time, he was also concerned with the commissioning of the third new rack locomotive in Austria.

By early August the three drivers were competent to drive without supervision but the

management initially decided that, for safety reasons, two men would occupy the cab. One does not take chances on a rack railway and the novice drivers were prone to fail the locomotive for trivial faults a more experienced man would know posed no danger. As a result the advertised steam services did not always run, much to the chagrin of some visitors.

It was not only the crew who were unfamiliar with steam, the fitters had their problems as well. The firebox arch was a particular source of trouble. The traditional firebrick construction has been replaced with a heat resistant stainless steel plate. Initially this had an insulated coating which became partially detached in use. Experiments showed that uncoated plates were capable of standing the fierce heat of the furnace, and this modification was made to all

three locomotives. Unfortunately the fitter at Glion put the plate in upside down, whereupon it collapsed in service, stranding No.1 on the line.

The new locomotives have an extremely efficient heat insulation on the boiler for the express purpose of maintaining the water close to boiling point overnight. The offending fitter is unlikely to make the same error again, having had to remove the buckled plate inside a stifling firebox. The irony of all this is that a more experienced crew would have appreciated that the locomotive would still steam without the deflector plate and the service could have been maintained for the day, leaving the replacement until mid-week when no steam running takes place on this fully electrified line.

## Reviews

### Lima BLS Re4/4 HO gauge

The new Lima BLS Re4/4 is a superb model. It is currently available as:

BLS	183	Kandersteg
SEZ	177	Zweisimmen
BN	179	Bern

all of which have spoked wheelsets and the diamond pattern pantograph. A fourth version is:

BLS	193	Steg
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with disc wheels and single arm pantograph; the disc wheels are correct for its original appearance in 1987, but I have a photograph taken in 1990 showing it with spoked wheels. Coming later this year will be:

BN	180	Ville de Neuchâtel
BLS	189	Niedergesteln
GBS	178	Schwarzenburg

The Lima models are all of the second and third series locomotives having the increased overall length over buffers of 15470 mm, the visible difference from the first series (161-173) being the position of the bufferbeams beneath the end platforms. The major dimensions are extremely close to 1:87 scale, the errors being mainly in the order of hundredths of a millimetre. The main difference lies in the bogie wheel centres, nearly 2 mm too great, though the more prominent axlebox detail appears to be at the correct spacing.

Lima attention to detail is commendable,

with beautifully accurate body and bogie mouldings. Differentiation is made between the two types of roof-mounted regenerative brake resistor housings, these being correctly matched to the prototype depicted. There are fine wire polished metal handrails, driver's mirrors, plus pipework and dummy scale couplings for the bufferbeams. A pair of replacement plough units is provided for use with scale couplings. The coupling box fouls these fittings and must be cut off should you wish to add this detail and scale couplings must then be used. As the plastic used cannot be glued, changing one's mind would involve replacing the bogie mouldings in their entirety.

The windscreens wipers are rather coarse and the right hand one does not fit well. The purchaser is expected to fit the roof insulator and connector parts, which are supplied as plastic mouldings. There is considerable detail variation here on the prototype, Lima supply the fittings consistent with No.193 with its single arm pantograph, they are not correct for other locomotives.

The paint finish is the correct BLS braun, with a convincing satin finish. However the BLS staff hand polish these machines to give a gloss finish. The individual name and shields